(b) and (c) Forum members reviewed the progress made on the earlier initiatives of the Forum and considered new steps to enhance bilateral cooperation between India and France. An important Forum initiative, the seminar on "India and France in a Multipolar World' was organised in New Delhi on February 16-17, 2000 and addressed by External Affairs Minister.

The measures taken by Govenment so far include the economic mega-show "France-India 2000' organised in New Delhi in December 1999; the "Water Technology Week' organised on November, 19-26, 1999 in the cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Calcutta; the signing of Letter of Intent between the two countries for setting up a Laser Laboratory in India; the "EduFrance' Seminar organised in India in November 1999 to popularise French higher education in India, the grant of an additional 100 scholarships for India; students by the French Government and the Seminar of India and France on "Multipolar World' organised in New Delhi on February 16-17, 2000.

Among the other measures being considered, in conformity with the recommendations of the Forum, are incresed cooperation in the field of Information Technology, Indian agriculture and food processing industry an encouragement of French particpation in Technology Summit and Chem-India 2000.

Chinese incursion across the LAC

2343. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chinese incursions across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) into the Indian territory in the Northern Ladakh region have increased significantly, particularly during the recent Kargil conflict;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government with regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) The resolution of the boundary question between India and china is outstanding. The two sides have differences in perception of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas, including in the Ladakh region of J&K (Western Sector). Both sides carry cut patrolling activity in the India-China border areas. Violations of the LAC are taken up through diplomatic channels and at Border Personnel Meetings/Flag Meetings.

The two sides are discussing the boundary question in the framework of the Joint Working Group. India and China have reiterated the objective of seeking a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question through dialogue. The Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas (1993) and the Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas (1996) provide an institutional framework for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the India-China border areas.

Government remain vigilant and take all necessary and appropriate measures to safeguard the sovereignty, territoral integrity and security of India.

Statement of Chief of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen

2344. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) wether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Pioneer of January 31, 2000, to the effect that Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Chief of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen had stated that his organisation considered India as enemy number one;

(b) whether it has also come to Government's notice that the US has called this militant outfit as a terrorist organisation and has been pressing Pakistan regime to shut it down; and

(c) if so, what was the Pak regime's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. Government have seen the news item published in the Pioneer on January 31, 2000. The United States of America has declared the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen as a terrorist organization. In a testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Chief Coordinator for counter terrorist in the US State Department informed the Senate Committee that Separatist groups involved in terrorism in Kashmir, such as the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, have been using Pakistan as their base and there have been reports that they have also been receiving material support from Pakistan. The United States has also been calling upon Pakistan to crackdown on such terrorist organizations operating within its territories.

Pakistan's state sponsorship of cross border terrorism in Jammu & kashmir and elsewhere in India continues unabated. This is now widely acknowledged